Naval versions of Prithvi is progressing. Government approval has also been given for design and development of next phase of Agni, i.e. long range system using state-of-the-art technologies developed indigenously.

Army laboratories to private sector

3850. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA:
SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has thrown open some of its major research laboratories to the private industry and set up six task forces to work out the parameters for long standing cooperation between the Ministry and the Industry;

(b) whether the task force would be instructed to ensure that defence secretary is not leaked; and

(c) the advantages to be accrued to the country by throwing open the army laboratories to private sector?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Eight laboratories of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) working in the areas of life science, water purification, materials including composites, electronics, advanced computing, robotics and artificial intelligence have been identified for industries' participation. Six task forces have been constituted to submit recommendations to enhance the partnership between the Defence Ministry and the Industry.

(b) Adequate measures will be taken to ensure that sensitive and classified information about programmes of Ministry of Defence is not disclosed.

(c) The enhanced partnership between DRDO laboratories and industry will enable optimum use of the expertise and infrastructure available in the Industry for Defence Research and Development programmes.

Aerial bombs

3851. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received complaints that despite the ban in dealing with middlemen and agents, concerned officials in the Ministry and IAF were insisting on buying aerial bombs from a Romanian Trading agent;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government to find out the factual position and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Government has received a complaint from a Romanian firm by the name Ratmil, which claims to be the only manufacturer of aerial bombs in Romania and also claims to have the licence from the Ministry of Defence, Romania for supplying these bombs to the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, Ratmil also claimed that Romtehnica with whom the Ministry of Defence had negotiated the contract is not the manufacturer but only a trading company.

(c) Immediately on receipt of this complaint the file records were carefully perused and it was found that the allegation was completely incorrect. In fact, Romtehnica with whom Ministry of Defence has carried out negotiations, had supplied a certificate issued by the Ministry of Defence Romania certifying that Romtehnica is the only authorised firm to deal with such supplies. The Indian Ambassador to Romania was asked to make necessary enquiries and to confirm as to who is empowered by the Romanian Ministry of Defence to contract with the Ministry of Defence, Government of India for supplying the bombs. The Romanian Ministry of Defence has confirmed that the State owned Company "Romtehnica" under the Romanian Ministry of Defence is the

only authorised company to conclude such contracts. The above factual position clearly indicates that the complaint is false and baseless.

Acquisition of land for Air Force

3852. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether land measuring 16.27 acres at Laitkor Peak, Shillong was acquired by the Defence Estates Officer, Guwahati during 1996 for Air Force utility;

(b) if so, the details of the specific reasons for acquiring the land by the Defence Estates Officer, Guwahati, when there was a clearcut decision from the Air Force authority not to acquire the said land;

(c) whether Government have fixed the responsibility for making payment of exorbitant amount of Rs. 1.06 crores during 1992 when original cost for the said land was 2.49 lakhs only in 1985; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Government sanction for acquisition of hired land measuring 16.27 acres at Laitkor Peak, Shillong, Meghalaya, was accorded in 1985. However, the final award was declared in 1993 and the awarded amount was paid to the Collector in 1996.

(b) Though, there was a proposal from the Air Force authorities for withdrawal of part of the land from acquisition but the land measuring 16.27 acres was acquired in 1996, in compliance of the orders of the Guwahati High Court and also due to the fact that Collector, Shillong had noted that land once acquired cannot be withdrawn as this land had become unfit for the purpose the owners were using it initially.

(c) and (d) The original cost of land was Rs. 2.49 lakhs which was assessed during 1985 whereas the cost on the date of publication of Section 4(1) of LA Act *i.e.* on 4.6.1992 in this case was to be paid. Therefore, an amount of Rs. 55,12,276 only has been paid as awarded by the Collector under Section 11 of LA Act and also in full satisfaction of the decree passed by Guwahati High Court.

Land acquisition by Air Force

3853. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air Force Authorities acquired 455 acres of land in 1962 in the vicinity of M/s Sonapur Tea Estate, District Kangmp, Assam and had been using without acquisition for decades;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the purpose and present day utility;

(c) whether the owner of the land was paid recurring compensation for the period from March, 1963 to 1972 but not beyond that; and

(d) if so, the reasons for such delay in acquisition, in paying the R.C., acquisition compensation, and when it is likely to be made?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) An area measuring 475.17 acres of land was requisitioned during 1962/63 by DC Kamrup for Air Force Station at Digaru in the vicinity of Sonapur Tea Estate. Land measuring 455 acres out of this was acquired on 5.8.1992.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The acquisition proceedings took time due to the fact that the matter was subjudice. Acquisition compensation has been deposited with the Collector for payment to the rightful owners. However, the quantum of recurring compensation for the period from 12.5.1972 to 30.8.1976 is subjudice in the Court of Arbitrator appointed by State Government in pursuance of Hon'ble Supreme Court's Orders. The Collector, Kamrup, has already been requested to determine recurring compensation for the period beyond 30.8.1976 till 5.8.1992.